

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, USA

Socialist Party
1901

Socialist Propaganda League
1916

Communist Propaganda League
1918

Left Wing Section of Socialist Party
February 1919

Majority (Quit Socialist Party)
August 1919

Minority (Foreign Federations Expelled from Socialist Party)
May 1919

Communist Labor Party
September 1919

Communist Party of America
September 1919

Minority

Majority

United Communist Party
1920

Communist Party of America (Unified)
1921

Workers Party of America
1921

Communist Party of America
1921

Workers (Communist) Party of America
1925

Communist Party of the U.S.A.
1929

Communist Political Association
May 1944

Communist Party of the U.S.A.
July 1945

Bolsheviks
1903

"October" (1917) Revolution

Call for Communist International
January 1919

Comintern
March 1919

Order from Comintern For Unification of Communists in U.S.A. 1920 and 1921

Section of Comintern

Section of Comintern

Section of Comintern

Section of Comintern

Disaffiliation November 1940

Formal Dissolution 1943

Duclos Letter April 1945

"Illegal" or underground organization

*ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY, USA*

The Communist Party, USA, as we know it today, actually evolved from the dissident left-wing elements in the Socialist Party of America.

The Socialist Party of America was organized in 1901 by a merger between two elements: (1) "Seceders" from the Socialist Labor Party who split away in 1899 because of the Socialist Labor Party's uncompromising endeavors to revolutionize the trade unions and (2) the Social Democratic Party of Wisconsin which was "a purely middle class liberal party tinged with Socialism." The Socialist Party of America was not a party of "one mind" and there was continued dissension in the Party much of which was based on the tactical issue of industrial unionism and violence. William D. "Big Bill" Haywood, one of the leaders, believed in industrial unionism with tactics of sabotage and violence.

At the 1912 convention of the Socialist Party of America, Morris Hillquit, the leader of the opposition, put through an amendment in the constitution calling for the expulsion of all members who advocated tactics of crime, sabotage and violence. The tactical issue of industrial unionism was "comprised in the problem of whether parliamentarism alone constituted political action or whether parliamentarism alone could accomplish the revolution or whether extra-parliamentary means were indispensable for the conquest of political power." The Socialist Party Convention, by a large majority, "emasculated the Marxian concept of political action, limiting it to parliamentarism."

After 1912 the Socialist Party in the United States "proceeded on its peaceful petty bourgeois way."

The Socialist Party was opposed to World War I. In 1917, the Party passed the St. Louis

resolution in opposition to World War I and adopted a policy of "petty bourgeois pacifism" and accepted President Wilson's "14 points" as its own program. The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 electrified the members of the Socialist Party and particularly affected the members of the foreign language speaking federation who dominated the Party leadership. As a result of the revolution many Party members returned to Russia. Those members who remained definitely separated into "right" and "left" wings. The aim and purpose of the "left" wing was to capture the Socialist Party and turn it into a Communist Party.

As the war in Europe continued there was a "revolutionary awakening in the Socialist Party in the United States, strengthened by new accesses of proletarian elements of the Party. The first organized expression of this awakening was the formation of the Socialist Propaganda League in Boston in 1916." The Socialist Propaganda League was a "left" wing group which adopted the Bolshevik program long before the Bolsheviks came into power in Russia. In January, 1918 the League issued a manifesto incorporating its principles and tactics, among which was: "Work both inside and outside the Socialist Party for the revolutionary reorganization of the American Socialist movement."

As of November 7, 1918, a Communist Propaganda League was organized in Chicago. The Communist Propaganda League had for its purpose the propagation of the revolutionary idea. On November 9, 1918, the local branch of the Socialist Party of Boston started to issue an agitational paper, namely, "The Revolutionary Age" which immediately issued a call to the Socialist Party for the adoption of revolutionary Communist tactics.

In February, 1919 the Left-Wing Section of the Socialist Party was organized in New York City. This group advocated a program for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism through a proletarian dictatorship.

On February 8, 1919, there was published in "The Revolutionary Age" the "Manifesto" and "Program" of the Left Wing of the American Socialist Party. Among the demands made were:

- (1) That an immediate emergency national convention be called to reorganize Party policies and tactics;
- (2) That unequivocal endorsement be given to the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, the Spartacus group of Germany, and the Left Wing movements of Europe.

In March, 1919 on the initiative of the Bolsheviks headed by V. I. Lenin, the First Congress of the Communist Parties of various countries held in Moscow founded the Communist International. The Congress adopted a manifesto to the proletariat of all countries, calling upon them to wage a determined struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the triumph of Soviets all over the world. Thus was founded an international revolutionary proletarian organization of a new type, namely, the Communist International - the Marxist-Leninist International.

The Left-Wing Section of the Socialist Party in New York City transmitted credentials to S. J. Rutgers to represent it at the Congress. The Boston Branch of the Party initiated a motion for a referendum to affiliate the Socialist Party with the Third International. This motion was rejected by the national administration of the Party but after much delay a referendum was secured and the vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the Third International.

On May 17-18, 1919, a convention of the Socialist Party in Cook County, Illinois, was held. This convention resulted in a clean sweep for the Left-Wing Section. This meant that control of the Cook County, Illinois, Local of the Socialist Party was in the hands of the Left Wing movement and that the platform and resolutions adopted were those of the Left Wing.

The convention further represented the Left Wing movement in Chicago, taking its theoretical initiative in the work of the Communist Propaganda League and its assuming a definite organization character.

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party met in Chicago from May 24 to May 30, 1919. During this meeting the National Executive Committee, by majority vote, expelled approximately 40,000 members who represented various Party organizations.

The Left Wing elements of the Socialist Party of America were represented at a National Conference held in New York City, on June 21-24, 1919. The Conference was composed of over ninety delegates. The purpose of convening the National Conference was to "conquer the whole Socialist Party for the revolutionary Socialism of the Communist International." An issue as to the immediate organization of a new or "Communist" Party was raised at the National Conference. The majority of the Organization Committee reported in favor of the Conference's organizing as the Left-Wing Section of the American Socialist Party. The majority further reported in favor of carrying on the fight within the Socialist Party and of Left Wing locals and states, including those expelled or suspended, electing delegates to the Emergency Conference of the Socialist Party scheduled for August 30, 1919, in Chicago.

The minority reported in favor of the immediate organization of a Communist Party but was defeated by a vote of 55 against 38.

On July 19, 1919, it was announced that there were differences between groups within the Left-Wing Section of the Socialist Party and a call was issued for the organization of a Communist Party in Chicago on September 1, 1919, by a "National Organization Committee." The other faction supporting the Left-Wing National Council desired to capture the apparatus of the old Socialist Party.

On July 26 and 27, 1919, the newly elected but officially unrecognized National Executive Committee of the Left Wing of the Socialist Party met in Chicago. It was decided that the Socialist Party must become the Communist Party of the United States and urged the Party membership to elect Left Wing delegates to attend the Emergency Convention scheduled for Chicago on August 30, 1919.

On August 23, 1919, it was announced that the National Council of the Left-Wing Section of the Socialist Party and the Central Committee of the Federated Russian Federations were in agreement and thus the split in the Left Wing forces was brought to an end. It was decided that there would be no attendance by those in agreement at the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party. It was announced that John Reed, Eadmon MacAlpine, and Benjamin Gitlow opposed the joint call issued by the National Council for a Communist Party Convention on September 1, 1919.

A Communist Party of America was formed in Chicago, Illinois, at a convention held September 1, 1919, of representatives of units of the Left Wing of the Socialist Party of America including the Foreign Language Federations. A manifesto, program and constitution were adopted by the convention. Louis C. Fraina was elected International Secretary and Charles E. Ruthenberg was elected National Secretary of the Communist Party of America. The Constitution adopted at the convention stated under Article I, Section I, that the official name of the organization was the Communist Party of America, the purpose of which was the education and organization of the working class "for the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the abolition of the capitalist system and the establishment of the Communist Society." The constitution of the Communist Party of America provided that the headquarters were to be located at Chicago, Illinois.

Delegates representing the majority of the Left Wing of the Socialist Party attended the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party which met in Chicago on August 30, 1919. These Left Wing delegates were refused seats in the Convention and thereupon set up their own convention in another hall in the same building as the Socialist Party's Emergency Convention under the auspices of the newly elected but not seated National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party.

On September 1, 1919, in Chicago, Illinois, the Left Wing delegates who had been refused seats in the Emergency Convention after attempting to establish some sort of organizational unity with the groups controlled by the Russian Federation, organized the Communist Labor Party of the United States of America. The platform of the Communist Labor Party of the United States of America, declared the organization "in full harmony with the revolutionary working class parties of all countries and stands behind the principles stated by the Third International formed at Moscow." The officers elected under the constitution were Alfred Wagenknecht, Executive Secretary, and the National Executive Committee consisted of Max Bedacht and four other individuals. The International delegates as elected under the constitution were the aforementioned Wagenknecht and John Reed of New York. The headquarters of the Communist Labor Party of the United States of America were first located at Cleveland, Ohio, but subsequently were moved to New York City.

John Reed, following the organizing convention, went to Moscow as the representative of the Communist Labor Party of the United States of America to affiliate it with the Communist International.

Louis C. Fraina, as International Secretary of the Communist Party of America, made application to the Executive Committee of the Communist International for admission of the Communist Party of America to the Bureau of the Communist International as a major party.

On November 8, 1919, the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party published a declaration directed to the Executive Committee and the members of the Communist Labor Party. This declaration concerned unity between the two organizations. The declaration discussed the differences which had arisen between the two organizations during the two conventions the first week of September, 1919, as well as ensuing differences. The Communist Party of America charged that the leadership of the Communist Labor Party had deliberately acted against Communist unity by instigating the origin of the Communist Labor Party. The membership was not blamed. However, the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America stated that it would accept the Communist Labor Party Branches as branches of the Communist Party where the Program and Constitution of the former were accepted. This, it was pointed out, would give the membership of the Communist Labor Party a "basis of equality." The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America offered to liquidate the national organization of the Communist Labor Party, take over its work, liabilities and assets with an offer to appoint a special committee to meet with a similar committee of the Communist Labor Party to arrange for the liquidation of the national organization of the Communist Labor Party.

In view of the continued dissension and because the Executive Committee of the Communist International would recognize only one party in a country, the Executive Committee of the Communist International addressed a letter to the Executive Committees of the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party. This letter concerned the uniting of the two parties. It was stated that representatives of both organizations had presented their views to the Executive Committee of the Communist International. The letter further stated that the split had done harm to the Communist movement in the United States but that a study of the documents from both sides reflected no serious differences in the program. The letter stated

in part "for the purpose of bringing about unity in the shortest possible time, the Executive Committee of the Communist International recommends the two parties immediately call a joint convention, the decisions of which shall be binding for both parties. As a basis for unity the principles laid down in the platform of the Communist International and the decisions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International must be taken."

On June 12, 1920, the first issue of "The Communist" which was the official organ of the United Communist Party of America, was issued. This publication contained an account of the convention which united the Communist Party of America and the Communist Labor Party into the United Communist Party. The article appearing in "The Communist" stated in part "that fifty-nine delegates came together from all parts of the United States, held sessions for seven days, debated every issue with absolute thoroughness, laid out the plan of work for the United Communist Party, all under the most perfect circumstances conceivable for such a convention." The article further stated that fictitious names were used by persons attending the convention. A representative of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was in attendance at this convention. Alfred Wagenknecht was elected Executive Secretary, Isaac E. Ferguson was elected International Secretary and Charles E. Ruthenberg was elected Editor, at the convention which established the United Communist Party of America. Article I, Section I, of the Constitution adopted at the convention stated "The name of this organization shall be the United Communist Party of America. It is the American Section of the Communist International."

In the meantime, the "majority" elements which remained in the Communist Party of America, continued opposition to the "minority" and the Communist Labor Party which banded together to form the United Communist Party of America. On July 1, 1920, an attack was made in the

official organ of the Communist Party of America which characterized the United Communist Party in the following language: "Born in compromise and betrayal, fathered by Centrists of the type of Damon, Y. F. & Co., and mothered by the Communist Labor Party with one who claims to be a representative from the Third International in the roll of Godfather. The latter is himself responsible for a great deal of the disorganization that has been going on recently in the Communist Party. Through his unwarranted meddling, this new united Centrist Party is doomed to an ignoble career in the Communist movement in this country."

On August 1, 1920, it was announced that the second convention of the Communist Party of America had been held. A Central Executive Committee of nine members and four alternates was elected. Section I, Article I, of the constitution provided that the name of this organization shall be the Communist Party of America. "Its purpose shall be the organization of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat to educate and lead the working class of America for the conquest of political power; to destroy the bourgeois state machinery; to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat; to abolish the capitalist system and to introduce the Communist Society." Section II, Article I, in the constitution provided that the Communist Party of America was an integral part of the Communist International.

At the Second World Congress, which was held in Moscow July 17 to August 7, 1920, Louis C. Fraina carried credentials from the Communist Party of America and John Reed carried credentials from the Communist Labor Party. (It is to be recalled that the Communist Labor Party merged with the "minority" of the Communist Party of America to form the United Communist Party.) John Reed was also on the Executive Committee of the Communist International. The Communist International instructed that the Communist Parties in the United States would have to unite and the

representatives of each in Moscow were in favor of so doing. The United Communist Party stated that it welcomed the decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and that it would give all the aid within its power to the Executive Committee of the Communist International to accomplish unity.

In the early part of 1921, the United Communist Party of America appealed to the Communist Party to unite with the former organization. The appeal referred to the statement of the Executive Committee of the Communist International which stated: "You are equally right. What separates you are but minor differences. You must unite for the big thing - the Revolution."

In the July, 1921, issue of "The Communist" which was the official organ of the Communist Party of America, Section of the Communist International, which was formed at the "Joint Unity Convention of the United Communist Party and the Communist Party of America," carried an article concerning the "Joint Unity Convention" which united the Communist Party of America and the United Communist Party. The constitution adopted at the Joint Unity Convention which formed the Communist Party of America under Article I, Section I, provides:

"The name of this organization shall be the Communist Party of America, Section of the Communist International." The following members of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America are still alive, namely, Alfred Wagenknecht, James P. Cannon, who is now National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, J. Lovestone, who is presently associated with David Dubinsky in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Joseph Zack and Alexander Bittelman, the latter of whom is now working at the Communist Party Headquarters in New York City. Section I, Article III, of the constitution states:

"The Communist Party of America is an underground illegal organization. It is highly centralized with the Convention as its supreme body, and the Central Executive Committee acting as such between conventions."

The Third World Congress of the Communist International took place in Moscow from June 22 to July 12, 1921. A delegate from the Communist Party of America to the Third World Congress of the Communist International was Max Bedacht, who used the alias of James A. Marshall and reported to the Communist Party of America regarding the proceedings of the Congress. The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America accepted the tactics adopted by the Third Congress of the Communist International stating, "we are only taking steps to carry out the especially emphatic instructions of the Third Congress to the Communist Party of America." These instructions of the Third Congress to the Communist Party of America were as follows: "The Communist International draws the attention of the Communist Party of America (unified) to the fact that the illegalized organization must not only serve as the ground for collecting and crystalizing the active Communist forces, but that it is the Party's duty to try all ways and means to get out of the illegalized condition into the open among the wide masses."

In August, 1921, a statement appearing in "The Communist" described the character of the Communist Party and discussed the "need for open work." This article stated "with the present openly stated purposes of the Party, that the use of armed force in the struggle to overthrow the capitalist state is an inevitable phase of the Proletarian Revolution, there is no question that the Communist Party will be able to maintain its existence only as a secret underground organization, until such time as the imminent victory of the Proletarian Revolution enables it to boldly assume the open leadership of the struggle."

In the October, 1921, issue of "The Communist" there was a statement which concerned the necessity of creating a legal organization "actively participating in every phase of the class struggle - on the industrial field, parliamentary field; on a platform that will meet the requirements of the law, as actually enforced by the ruling class. We must have an organization co-existing with the Communist Party and led by it."

On December 16, 1921, there was published "A Call" to a convention to organize the Workers Party of America, scheduled for New York City, December 23-26, 1921. This convention was for the purpose of establishing an open, or legal, party in line with the decisions of the Communist International. "The Call" which was a document signed by the Workers Party Convention Committee in discussing the proposed Workers Party of America stated: "It shall be a party of militant, class-conscious workers, bound by discipline and organized on the basis of Democratic centralization with full power in the hands of the Central Executive Committee between conventions. The Central Executive Committee of the Party shall also coordinate and direct the work of Party members in trade unions."

The first convention of the Workers Party of America which was held in New York City in December, 1921, adopted a constitution which among other things provided that the emblem for the Party was the crossed hammer and sickle with a circle margin, having at the top "Workers Party of America" and underneath "Workers of the World, Unite." As of March 4, 1922, James P. Cannon was Chairman and Caleb Harrison was Secretary of the Workers Party of America.

Thus the legal or above-ground Communist organization had been organized. The Communist Party remained in organized form, but on an illegal or underground basis. The underground organization was affiliated with the

Third Communist International, whereas the Workers Party of America was not so affiliated. Among the members of the Communist movement, the underground Communist Party was known as the number one organization while the Workers Party was the number two organization.

There was to develop, however, a difference of opinion as to the status of the Workers Party inasmuch as a part of the underground Communist Party split from the underground movement, feeling that the Workers Party of America was given too much autonomy and that its program was no more than a remote approach to a Communist program.

On August 19, 1922, it was announced in "The Worker," the official paper, that the Second National Convention of the Workers Party of America would be held in Chicago, Illinois. The convention of the Workers Party of America, however, was postponed in light of what transpired at the Secret Convention of the Underground Communist Party of America, which was held in Bridgman, Michigan. The convention was postponed inasmuch as many of the prominent members of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party of America who were officials in the Communist Party of America had been arrested at Bridgman, Michigan, by State and Federal Law Enforcement officials. Seventeen members of the Communist Party of America were arrested for violation of the Criminal Syndicalism Law of that State (Michigan). The representatives of the respective factions who had been in Moscow just prior to the Convention and who attended the Convention arguing their merits before the Executive Committee of the Communist International, were Ludwig E. Katterfeld and J. Lovestone. Three Comintern representatives attended the convention at Bridgman, Michigan. After the Bridgman, Michigan, incident, the Communist Party of America had to continue as an underground organization although its main task consisted in open work, "especially through the Legal Political Party (Workers Party of America) and the trade unions."

On November 18, 1922, the Workers Party of America announced that it had sent "Fraternal Delegates" to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, which was held in Moscow from November 5 to December 5, 1922. The delegates were: Alexander Trachtenberg, Max Bedacht and James Cartwright.

On December 9, 1922, the Workers Party of America through Charles E. Ruthenberg, Secretary, announced that it had a "total average membership" of 12,394.

On December 9, 1922, the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party of America issued a statement wherein it was stated that "The Workers Party is a Communist Party, but it cannot become the Communist Party of America, the American Section of the Communist International, as long as the Communist Party is compelled to exist underground. It is the task of the Workers Party to create those conditions which will enable the Communist Party to exist openly, to fight and work openly."

On April 28, 1923, it was publicly announced that the Communist movement in the United States was "again carrying on its work in the open." It was further stated "through the Workers Party it is publicly advocating the principles of Communism and winning the support of the workers for these principles. The Communists organized in the Workers Party are no longer the outcasts of the labor movement."

In January, 1924, William Z. Foster, Secretary of the Trade Union Educational League, was elected Chairman of the Workers Party. On July 10, 1924, William Z. Foster was nominated by the National Conference of the Workers Party for President of the United States. Benjamin Gitlow, member of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party and editor of the Jewish daily, "Freiheit," was nominated by the National Conference of the Workers Party for Vice-President of the United States.

There was no convention of the Workers Party of America between the 1923 convention and the convention in August, 1925. The Communist Party of America was engaging more in American politics and members were able to penetrate non-Communist political organizations. Partly as a result of this, the underground organization came to be used less and less, and at a conference of the underground organization prior to the August, 1925, convention it was decided to dispense with the underground and the necessity for dual meetings and to change the name of the Workers Party to include the word Communist in its title. The Workers Party was to contain the leaders of both the Communist and Workers Party.

The contemplated merger was accompanied with factionalism and a struggle for power developed within the ranks. One group was under the leadership of William Z. Foster, which later became known at the fourth convention as "the majority." The other group which became known as "the minority," was under the leadership of Charles E. Ruthenberg.

The Fourth National Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party of America was held in Chicago, Illinois, on August 21-30, 1925. The majority representatives consisted of Alexander Bittelman, James P. Cannon, William Dunne, Earl Browder, William Z. Foster and others. The minority representatives were Charles Ruthenberg, Max Bedacht, J. Lovestone, William Weinstone and others.

On January 18, 1926, William Z. Foster and Alexander Bittelman, who were in Moscow, submitted a report to the Communist International on the Workers (Communist) Party of America with a request that Party difficulties be adjusted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. In February, 1926, Earl Browder represented the Communist Party of America at the session of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International in Moscow.

On October 27, 1928, the Political Committee of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers (Communist) Party of America unanimously expelled from the Party James P. Cannon, member of the Political Committee; Martin Abern, member; and Max Schachtman, candidate of the Central Executive Committee on the charges that they shared the views of the Trotskyist Opposition outside the Comintern.

The Sixth National Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party which opened on March 10, 1929, in New York City received an open letter from the Communist International. The main portion of the letter from the Comintern was directed against the factionalism that had existed in the American Party for some time. A portion of the letter read as follows: "The existing factions must be resolutely and definitely liquidated. The factional struggle must be unconditionally stopped. Without this, no mass Communist Party of the American proletariat can be organized. The Sixth Convention of the Workers Party must categorically prohibit any further factional struggle under threat of expulsion from the Party...."

On March 10, 1929, the convention adopted an amendment to the constitution of the Party by which the name of the Party was changed to "Communist Party of the United States of America, Section of the Communist International. At this convention the Central Executive Committee elected a new Secretariat composed of: William Z. Foster, Benjamin Gitlow and Max Bedacht. In the year 1929 Ben Gitlow and J. Lovestone were expelled from the Communist Party and Stalin placed his blessing on the leadership of William Z. Foster and Earl Browder. For approximately fourteen years thereafter the Party continued under the name of the Communist Party of the United States of America, Section of the Communist International and there was continued harmony in the Party during this period. Earl Browder was General Secretary of the Party during this time.

A new constitution for the Communist Party of the United States of America was adopted by the Tenth National Convention of the Communist Party on May 31, 1938. The nature or purpose of the Communist Party was not changed by virtue of the adoption of the new constitution which contained the following language in the preamble; "... it (the Communist Party of the United States of America) is devoted to defense of the immediate interests of workers, farmers, and all toilers against capitalist exploitation and to preparation of the working class for its historic mission to unite and lead the American people, to extend these democratic principles to their necessary and logical conclusions..... by the establishment of socialism, according to the scientific principles enunciated by the greatest teachers of mankind, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, embodied in the Communist International."

The new constitution contained the following provision concerning the affiliation of the Communist Party, USA, with the Communist International. "The Communist Party of the USA is affiliated with its fraternal Communist Parties of other lands through the Communist International and participates in International Congresses through its national committee. Resolutions and decisions of International Congresses shall be considered and acted upon by the supreme authority of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., the National Convention, or between conventions by the National Committee."

On May 31, 1938, the Tenth National Convention re-elected Earl Browder as General Secretary of the Communist Party and William Z. Foster as the National Chairman.

After the dissolution of the Communist International on June 10, 1943, Earl Browder developed his own views as to the war situation and decided that if Stalin was willing to

dissolve the Communist International to extract more cooperation from the capitalist Allies, he, Browder, as leader of the Communist Party, USA, should dissolve the Communist Party, USA, and establish in its place the Communist Political Association which would be a non-political type of organization and which would be more acceptable to capitalist America. Browder was able to put over this idea in the Communist movement and at a National Convention held on May 20, 1944, the Communist Party, USA, was dissolved and a Communist Political Association was established in its place. For a period of fourteen months the Communist Political Association existed and advocated complete cooperation with the U.S. Government which at that time was extending aid to the Soviet Union. The first portion of the preamble to the constitution of the Communist Political Association read as follows:

"The Communist Political Association is a non-political organization of Americans which basing itself upon the working class carried forward the traditions of Washington, Jefferson, Payne, Jackson and Lincoln under the changed conditions of modern industrial society."

In April 1945, just as it was apparent that Germany was going to surrender and that the Soviet Union was once again secure, Jacques Duclos, a Frenchman, flew back to France from Moscow and wrote an article which appeared in the Communist Press of France. This article assailed Earl Browder and denounced Browder's action in dissolving the Communist Party, USA. The article bitterly attacked the formation of the Communist Political Association. In view of this criticism from Jacques Duclos who apparently had his instructions from Russia, the Communist leaders assembled in a pre-convention caucus and discussed the Duclos article. The Duclos article was reprinted in the "Daily Worker" of May 24, 1945, with a foreward by Earl Browder who was then the editor-in-chief of the Daily Worker and the President of the

Communist Political Association.

The National Convention of the Communist Political Association convened in New York City on July 26, 1945, and received the unanimous recommendation of the National Board of the Communist Political Association that the Communist Party be promptly reconstituted. The convention voted to reconstitute the Communist Party of the United States of America, adopted a new constitution and elected new national officers. The first sentence of the preamble of the constitution stated "The Communist Party of the USA is the political party of the American working class, basing itself on the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism." Earl Browder was removed from the leadership of the Communist Party and William Z. Foster became its leader.

Since the Communist Party, USA, was reconstituted in July, 1945, it has constantly become more antagonistic toward the American Government and as the international relations between the Soviet Union and the American Government have deteriorated, the Communist Party has continued to champion the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and to criticize bitterly the American foreign policy.

The Communist Party, USA describes itself in its Constitution as being a class political party "basing itself upon the principles of scientific socialism Marxism-Leninism." By Marxism-Leninism is meant a complete system of thought formulated by Karl Marx ("the originator"), Frederick Engels ("the collaborator"), V. I. Lenin ("the developer") and Joseph Stalin ("the continuer"). This system of thought consists of seven basic ideas: (1) an atheistic explanation of man and the universe; (2) a materialistic interpretation of history; (3) advocacy of the abolition of the State and private property used in production; (4) a revolutionary theory, method and a violent revolution where necessary

to overthrow the non-Communist social orders; (5) rejection of the Judaic-Christian moral code and the substitution for it of a moral code based on non-supernatural proletarian utility (the end justifies the means); (6) destruction of all religions; (7) a world-wide Communist society which will be stateless, classless and Godless.

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IV. HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

- A. There was no organized Communist movement in the United States prior to the Communist Revolution which took place in Russia on November 7, 1917 (October by the Russian calendar, hence it is referred to as the October Revolution in present day Communist literature).
1. During the period extending from March 2 to 6, 1919, the Third (Communist) International was founded under the guidance of V. I. Lenin.
 - a. It rejected the socialist program of reform and called for a violent overthrow of all non-Communist governments throughout the world.
 2. With the development of the Communist Revolution in Russia and of the Third International, the American Communists, who had been working within the framework of the Socialist Party, were electrified and stimulated into following in the footsteps of their Russian comrades:
 - a. The first main step of the American Communists was to cause the Socialist Party to be split into a right-wing and a left-wing group.
 - b. The left-wing group looked to the Russians for ideological leadership. This caused the right-wing group to take a definite stand against Russian leadership and against the Third International and those who supported it.
 3. On August 30, 1919, an Emergency National Convention of the Socialist Party was held at the Machinist Hall in Chicago, Illinois.
 - a. The left-wing element planned to capture the Party in order to make it not Socialist but Communist.
 - b. The right-wing element learned of these plans and, with the help of the police, prevented the "leftists" from entering the Machinist Hall where the Convention was to be held. This was tantamount to expulsion.
 4. On being so expelled the left-wing element (many of whom were native born Americans) returned to another hall of the same building and held a meeting of their own.
 - a. As a result of this action, they founded on September 1, 1919, the Communist Labor Party. This was the first time a Communist party had been formed in the United States.
 5. From September 1-5, 1919, the predominantly foreign born Communists of the left-wing group held a Convention of their own in the Russian Federation Building in Chicago.

- a. At this time they founded the Communist Party of America which subsequently became dominated by the foreign language federations active in this period.
6. As a result of this conflict between the native and the foreign born Communists two Communist parties were created in the United States overnight.
 - a. It is of some interest to note that the Communist Party was born in conflict. It has lived in conflict ever since and it may die in conflict. Because of its very nature it cannot avoid conflict.
7. It is also of some interest to note that Communism of its very nature is divisive. It lends itself readily to the formation of "splinter groups." Even in the period of its founding it divided and divided again. From it other parties have come. For example, the Michigan State Socialist Party, which at this time was a portion of the left-wing group, broke away from the Communist Party of America to become the Proletarian Party of America which is still in existence. There have been many other such examples both here and in foreign nations, the most recent significant defection being the Communist Party of Yugoslavia which has behind it the power and organization of an entire nation.

B. The Third (Communist) International would recognize only one Communist party in a nation.

1. As a result of this the two Communist parties in the United States reconsidered their differences and merged in the Spring of 1921 to form the Communist Party of America.
2. This Party accepted the "twenty-one points" of administration of the Third International referred to previously.

C. Congress passed the Deportation Statute of October 16, 1918, designed to provide for the deportation of radical aliens who were opposed to government or who believed in, or advocated its overthrow by force and violence, or who were members of an organization of this nature. The following year, 1919, this law was applied against the Communists and the Party went underground.

1. Two Communist organizations were formed in 1921, the underground organization continued as the Communist Party of America and the above-ground organization became known as the Workers Party of America. The latter did not affiliate with the Third International as a subterfuge to avoid prosecution but it did support its programs nevertheless.

- D. Late in 1922 and in 1923 government action against the Communists lessened and the Communist Party of America rose from the underground to merge again as one party, which became known as the Workers Party of America. This was done with the approval of Communist leaders in Russia. This "new" Party reaffirmed the principles of the Russian-dominated Third International.
1. During its Convention of 1925, the Party again changed its name, this time to: Workers (Communist) Party of America.
- E. Following some years of considerable internal dissension (1923-1929) the Party became known officially in 1929 as the Communist Party of the United States of America. At this time Joseph Stalin placed his important stamp of approval upon the leadership of Earl Browder and William Z. Foster and top Communists who had been guilty of factionalist activities were expelled.
1. For the first time the Party became relatively monolithic, that is, a party allowing no factionalism.
 2. The Party continued with considerable harmony under its new name and leadership for fourteen years.

(NOTE: You will find immediately following this page and numbered page 16(b) a chart captioned "Origin and Continuity of the Communist Party." It is believed this will assist you in getting a more complete grasp of the Socialistic background and early origins of the Communist Party of the United States as it now exists.)

STANDARD B & P "NOTED"

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- F. In May, 1944 at a National Convention the Communist Party of the United States of America dissolved itself and there was established in its place the Communist Political Association.
1. Earl Browder, General Secretary, was the leading force behind this change.
 2. Browder was influenced in this course of action by the dissolving of the Communist International for the purpose of facilitating the war effort in behalf of Communist interests.
 - a. He reasoned that a similar policy in the United States manifested by the dissolving of the Communist Party would facilitate war efforts here, for the Communist Political Association could be more acceptable to capitalist America than the old, militant, revolutionary Party.
 3. Disagreement among the American Communists followed Browder's action. The opposition centered around William Z. Foster.
 4. Jacques Duclos, a French Communist leader subject to Russian influence, issued a strongly worded article criticizing Browder's action in Cahiers du Communisme, April, 1945.
- G. At a convention held in July 1945 the Communist Political Association was dissolved and the Communist Party, USA, was reconstituted.
1. Earl Browder was removed from his position of leadership and William Z. Foster assumed the leadership which he still maintains. Likewise the name of the Party remains as it was reconstituted in 1945.
 2. Browder was charged with mutilating and deviating from Marxist-Leninist principles in the direction of the "right." He was expelled by the Party and remains outside it and is regularly condemned by it.
 3. Since repudiating "Browderism," the Communist Party, USA, has continued on with its militant interpretation and application of the so-called "science" of Marxism-Leninism. In 1950 it is more militant and defiant than it has been for years.
- H. The year 1949 witnessed repeated action against the American Communists.

1. On July 20, 1948 twelve members of the National Board of the Communist Party, USA were indicted. The trial opened in New York City January 17, 1949 and eleven members were found guilty under the Smith Act on October 14, 1949. The twelfth member, William Z. Foster, was not prosecuted because of illness.
2. Investigations conducted under the Federal Loyalty Program (initiated in compliance with Executive Order 9835 on March 21, 1947) continued in 1949 to eliminate Communists and other subversives from the Federal Government.
3. Twenty-one Communists were cited for contempt in Los Angeles.
4. Twelve Communists were cited for contempt in Denver.
5. Harry Bridges was prosecuted, convicted, sentenced and in 1950 placed in jail. He has since been released on bail.
6. The Government began deportation proceedings against a number of Communists, for example:
 - a. Proceedings to deport Alex Bittelman to Russia.
 - b. Proceedings to deport Claudia Jones to Trinidad, West Indies.
 - c. Proceedings to deport Jack Stachel to Poland.
 - d. Proceedings to deport Irving Potash to Russia.
7. Organized labor pressed a strong campaign to remove Communists from positions of influence in labor unions.
8. Some universities took action against Communist members of the faculty.
9. Different men in high ranking positions in business, education, religion, science and public life commenced to speak out ever more effectively against the Communist menace.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, USA

Organiz. Struct., CP, USA

V. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, USA*

A. The National Convention is the highest authority, in theory, of the Communist Party, USA.

1. As a matter of fact it is known that the drafts of the suggested National Convention's deliberations have been sent out to Moscow, Russia for approval before the Convention begins.

*The operations of the Communist Party, USA, are controlled from the National Headquarters of the Party located at 35 East 12th Street, New York City. Membership figures for the Communist Party, USA, fluctuate considerably. It is estimated that at present the Party has a membership consisting of about 54,000 persons.

2. The National Convention is usually held every two years for the purpose of establishing the Party's "line" for the two years to follow.

3. The National Convention also has for its function the election of new officers, including a national chairman and a general secretary.

- a. The secretary is regarded, generally, as being the titular leader of the Party. However, the distinction between the secretary and chairman is not clear-cut, therefore it is possible for the latter to be the titular leader if deemed necessary.

B. National Committee

1. This Committee is elected by the National Convention. Its membership is not fixed and it can vary from a few to 50 members or more. At the present time it has 13 members. Membership is determined by the National Convention.

2. The purpose of the National Committee is to act on matters affecting the Party "line" during an emergency and to serve for the National Convention when the latter is not in session. This includes:

- a. Organizing and supervising various departments, committees and commissions of the Party.
- b. Guiding and directing all political and organizational work of the Party.
- c. Directing and supervising the Party press.
- d. Administering the Treasury of the Party.
- e. Organizing and directing all other important undertakings of importance to the entire Party.

3. The National Committee under normal conditions meets at least three times a year.

C. National Board

1. The National Board is elected by the National Committee and it is charged with the responsibility of carrying on the day to day work of the Party. It carries out the decisions of the National Committee. A full meeting of the Board is normally held once each month.

2. The National Board at the present time consists of twelve members, eleven of whom were tried and convicted in the Communist trial referred to previously.
- D. The United States is divided into various Communist organizational units such as:
1. District organizations (30 in number) *
 2. State organizations
 3. County organizations
 4. City organizations
 5. Sectional organizations
 6. Club organizations
 7. Group organizations
- E. Within the over-all Communist organizational apparatus are other organizational units known as commissions, departments and committees, designed to suggest and help carry through policy which will build Communist strength in many different fields. Some of the main ones are:
1. Review Commission
 2. Cultural Commission
 3. Farm Commission
 4. Legislation Commission
 5. Organization Department
 6. Student Commission
 7. Trade Union Commission

*In order to coordinate the various districts in the interior of the United States, the Communist Party, USA, has set up two regional headquarters, the Midwestern region with headquarters in Chicago, and the Rocky Mountain region with headquarters in Denver.

8. Education, Agitation and Publications Department
9. Women's Commission
10. Negro Commission
11. Press Commission
12. Veterans' Commission
13. Nationality Groups Commission
14. Youth Commission
15. Foreign Affairs Committee

Splinter Groups --

S P L I N T E R G R O U P S

XV. COMMUNIST PARTY, USA AND THE OPPOSING SPLITTER GROUPS

- A. From the beginning different groups have broken off from the main historical trunk of Communism to form movements of their own. Some of these groups active in the United States today are:
1. Socialist Workers Party
 - a. It was organized December 31, 1937--January 3, 1938 at Chicago, Illinois.
 - b. Ideologically the Party is based on the teachings of Karl Marx and V. I. Lenin as interpreted by Leon Trotsky.
 - c. Although the Party is anti-Stalinist the Party has indicated it would align itself with Soviet Russia in the event of a war between this country and Soviet Russia.
 - d. It is now supporting Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia in his quarrel with the Stalinists.
 - e. On December 8, 1941 eighteen members of the Socialist Workers Party were sentenced in Minneapolis, Minnesota under the Smith Act for conspiracy with intent to interfere with and imperil the loyalty, morals and discipline of the military and moral forces of the United States. They were accused of counseling and causing insubordination and

mutiny and refusal of duty by members of the military and naval forces.

- f. Of the eighteen members, twelve received sixteen months and six received a year and a day in jail.
 - g. Its publications are The Militant (a weekly) and The Fourth International (a monthly).
 - h. Shortly after the Fourth International organization was formed in Switzerland on September 3, 1938, the Socialist Workers Party announced it was the American Sector of it. On December 21, 1940 it disaffiliated because of the terms of the Voorhis Act.
 - i. It has a membership of approximately 1000 persons and maintains its national headquarters at 116 University Place, New York, New York.
2. Independent Socialist League*
- a. This group was formed in 1940, splitting off from the Socialist Workers Party.
 - b. Ideologically this group is also based on the teachings of Karl Marx and V. I. Lenin as interpreted by Leon Trotsky instead of by Joseph Stalin.
 - c. It differs with the Socialist Workers Party in that its officials claim their Party will not support Soviet Russia in the event of a war between Russia and the United States.
 - d. Its present main purpose is to infiltrate the labor movement in order to eventually organize the working classes for the abolition of capitalism and the creation of a workers government based upon socialism.
 - e. At this time it considers itself to be essentially a propaganda group rather than a real political party.
 - f. Its membership consists of about 375 persons, with their national headquarters being located at 4 Court Square, Long Island City, New York.

*This organization was formerly known as The Workers Party.

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